AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remains under examination in the application are presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier.

1. (Original) A method of manufacturing a fibrous formed product, wherein the fibrous formed product includes a low-density layer coarsely formed mainly by thick fibers interleaved between upper and lower high-density layers closely formed mainly by the thin fibers, comprising:

(a) preparing a mixture of fibers including thick fibers and thin fibers, wherein an average weight of a thin fiber is smaller that an average weight of a thick fiber; and

(b) forming a first and second fibrous mat from the mixed fibers, wherein each fibrous mat comprises a low-density layer coarsely formed mainly by the thick fibers and a high-density layer closely formed mainly by the thin fibers, and wherein each of the fibrous mats are formed by:

(b1) supplying the mixed fibers onto an outer peripheral surface of a roller, wherein the roller is configured so as to temporarily retain the mixed fibers on the outer peripheral surface; and

(b2) rotating the roller so as to rotate the mixed fibers with the roller and releasing the mixed fibers from the roller, so that the mixed fibers are thrown toward a fiber receiving surface by a rotational force of the roller so as to form a fibrous mat on the fiber receiving surface; and

(c) inverting the first fibrous mats; and

(d) overlaying the inverted first fibrous mats with the second fibrous mats such that the low-density layers of each fibrous mat oppose each other; and

(e) joining the overlaid first and second fibrous mats to each other; and

(f) bonding the fibers together.

2. (Original) The method as in claim 1, wherein the first and second fibrous mats are formed by utilizing the same roller and the same fiber receiving surface.

3. (Original) The method as in claim 1, wherein different rollers form the first and second fibrous mats.

4. (Original) The method as in claim 3, wherein the first and second fibrous mats are formed on different fiber receiving surfaces and

wherein the step (c) comprises:

placing the first fibrous mat on a moving surface located below the roller to be used in forming the second fibrous mat such that the low-density layer of the first fibrous mat is positioned at the upper side of the first fibrous mat; and

wherein the low-density layer, of the first fibrous mat placed on the moving surface located below the roller to be used in forming the second fibrous mat, becomes the fiber receiving surface of the second fibrous mat;

wherein the step (d) comprises;

forming the second fibrous mat on top of the first fibrous mat such that the low density layer of the second fibrous mat is formed opposed to the low-density layer of the first fibrous mat.

5. (Original) The method as in claim 4, wherein the fiber receiving surface of the first fibrous mat causes the first fibrous mat to move in an opposite direction of the moving surface located below the roller to be used in the forming of the second fibrous mat, and

wherein the fiber receiving surface of the first fibrous mat is positioned above the moving surface located below the roller to be used in the forming of the second fibrous mat, and

wherein the placing of the first fibrous mat of step (c) comprises having the first fibrous mat transfer from an end of the fiber receiving surface of the first fibrous mat and land on the moving surface located below the roller to be used in the forming of the second fibrous mat, such that the low-density layer of the first fibrous mat is positioned at the upper side of the first fibrous mat.

6. (Original) The method as in claim 1, wherein the thin fibers comprise inorganic fibers and thermoplastic resin fibers, and the thermoplastic resin fibers serve as agents for bonding the other fibers together.

7. (Original) The method as in claim 6, wherein the thermoplastic resin fibers comprise polypropylene fibers.

8. (Original) The method as in claim 7, wherein the polypropylene fibers have a diameter range between 15 μm and 17 μm.

9. (Original) A method as in claim 6, wherein the inorganic fibers comprise carbon fibers.

10. (Original) A method as in claim 9, wherein the carbon fibers have a diameter less than 10 μm.

11. (Original) A method as in claim 1, wherein the thick fibers comprise sisal hemp fibers.

12. (Original) A method as in claim 11, wherein the sisal hemp fibers have a diameter selected between 80 μm and 250 μm.

13-28. Cancel